

Message Text

SECRET

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ORIGIN SS-25

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TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS NIACT IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

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EXDIS//FOR AMBASSADOR SEELYE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, MOPS, PINS, LE, SY, IS

SUBJECT: LEBANON SITUATION

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1. IN ABSENCE OF KHADDAM, YOU SHOULD GET IN TOUCH AS QUICKLY
AS POSSIBLE ON 30TH WITH KADDOUR, DAOUDI, OR ANY OTHER
SENIOR SYRIAN OFFICIAL AVAILABLE. WE BELIEVE ALL APPRO-
PRIATE MEMBERS OF EMBASSY STAFF SHOULD ALSO GET IN TOUCH
WITH KEY CONTACTS TO PARALLEL YOUR APPROACH AND TO SHARE
OUR CONCERN ABOUT DEVELOPING SITUATION IN LEBANON.

2. YOU SHOULD MAKE THE FOLLOWING MAJOR POINTS, WEAVING IN OVERNIGHT DEVELOPMENTS AS YOU SEE FIT.

-- WE ARE HIGHLY CONCERNED OVER RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN LEBANON, INCLUDING THE FIGHTING THAT HAS OCCURRED IN AREA OF MOUNT LEBANON AS WELL AS THE NEW OUTBURST IN THE BEIRUT AREA. THE INCIDENT IN THE BCHARRE AREA HAS AROUSED INTENSE INTEREST HERE IN THE U.S. ORDINARY U.S. CITIZENS WITH NO POLITICAL AX TO GRIND, BUT WITH TIES OF BLOOD OR FRIENDSHIP WITH FAMILIES IN THESE AREAS OF THE LATEST FIGHTING AND LATEST INCIDENTS HAVE BECOME DEEPLY CONCERNED. THERE ARE MEANWHILE WIDESPREAD ALLEGATIONS THAT THE SYRIAN UNITS OF THE ADF ARE READY TO CRUSH THE MILITARY POWER OF THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS ONCE AND FOR ALL.

-- WHILE WE RECOGNIZE THAT CERTAIN MARONITE LEADERS -- FOR REASONS OF THEIR OWN -- WANT TO AGGRAVATE TENSIONS AND ADD TO APPREHENSIONS, WE HAVE DETECTED AN ELEMENT OF PANIC IN PARTS OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN LEBANON, AND THIS IS EXTREMELY TROUBLING.

-- WE DEPLORE THE SHRILL RHETORIC COMING FROM VARIOUS QUARTERS, INCLUDING ISRAEL. THE SYRIANS SHOULD NOTE THAT, ON AUGUST 29, THE DEPARTMENT PRESS SPOKESMAN CALLED FOR RESTRAINT IN SUCH RHETORIC, WHICH ONLY EMBITTERS THE SITUATION.

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-- WHILE MAKING ABSOLUTELY CLEAR THAT YOU ARE NOT REPEAT NOT CONVEYING IN ANY SENSE AN ISRAELI WARNING, YOU SHOULD POINT OUT IN CLEAR TERMS THAT THERE ARE RISKS THAT MIS-CALCULATIONS ABOUT THE SYRIAN ROLE ARE EVEN NOW TAKING PLACE IN ISRAEL. IT IS THEREFORE IMPORTANT THAT THE U.S. BE INFORMED AUTHORITATIVELY BY THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT OF ITS PRESENT POLICY IN LEBANON, AS WELL OVER THE LONGER RUN.

-- SYRIAN POLICYMAKERS HAVE REGULARLY INDICATED -- PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY, TO THE U.S. AND OTHERS -- THAT THIS IS SIMPLY ONE OF ASSISTING THE SARKIS GOVERNMENT TO PRESERVE SECURITY AND RESTORE LAW AND ORDER. THIS HAS BEEN A THANKLESS TASK IN MANY RESPECTS AND SYRIA HAS HAD TO DEAL WITH MANY PROVOCATIONS AND MANY CRITICISMS.

-- IN THE SPIRIT OF THE CANDID AND OPEN EXCHANGES WE HAVE HAD WITH SYRIA ON THE LEBANESE SITUATION FOR ALMOST THREE YEARS, WE MUST --IN ALL CANDO,-- SAY THAT SYRIA HAS NOT BEEN AS SUCCESSFUL AS IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN IN CONVINCING ALL CONCERNED THAT ITS OBJECTIVES ARE STRICTLY LIMITED

AND THAT SYRIA WILL WITHDRAW FROM LEBANON WHEN THE SARKIS GOVERNMENT IS ABLE TO MAINTAIN SECURITY ON ITS OWN.

-- IF SYRIAN POLICY OBJECTIVES REMAIN AS EARLIER DESCRIBED, THEN WE MUST URGE THAT SYRIA FIND A MORE CREDIBLE WAY OF ALLAYING SUSPICIONS AND RESTORING INTERNATIONAL CONFIDENCE IN SYRIAN INTENTIONS. AT YOUR DISCRETION, YOU MAY ADVANCE THE IDEA OF THE SYRIANS ANNOUNCING A UNILATERAL REDUCTION IN ITS FORCES IN LEBANON IN, SAY, A FEW WEEKS OR MONTHS HENCE, ON CONDITION THAT SECURITY CONDITIONS ARE QUIET FOR THAT PERIOD, OR ANY OTHER MUTUALLY SATISFACTORY FORMULA

YOU AND THE SYRIAN OFFICIAL MIGHT AGREE TO EXAMINE, ALONG THE LINES OF RECENT EXCHANGES ON THIS CONCEPT WITH DEPART-
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MENT.

-- WE ARE ALSO CONCERNED THAT THE SITUATION IN THE NORTH MAY HAVE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE DISCUSSION BY THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON RENEWAL OF UNIFIL WHICH WILL TAKE PLACE BEFORE SEPTEMBER 19 WHEN UNIFIL'S MANDATE EXPIRES. WE BELIEVE SMOOTH RENEWAL OF THE MANDATE IS ESSENTIAL. WE ARE SURE SYRIA AGREES WITH US ON THIS ISSUE.

3. WITH REGARD TO FIRST TICK ABOVE, YOU SHOULD NOTE THAT ANTHONY KAIROUZ, U.S. CITIZEN, AND MEMBER OF PROMINENT LEBANESE FAMILY, WAS KILLED IN THE BCHARRE AFFAIR. CHRISTOPHER

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